

VZCZCXRO7063
PP RUEHNEH
DE RUEHAH #0569 1251153
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 051153Z MAY 09 ZDF
FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2770
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 5162
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2906
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2771
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 3406
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 3525

UNCLAS ASHGABAT 000569

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN, EEB, OES, INFLUENZA TASK FORCE TFFLU01,
USAID (WALLIN)

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KFLU](#) [AEMR](#) [ASEC](#) [AMED](#) [CASC](#) [KFLO](#) [TBIO](#) [KSAF](#) [KPAO](#)

PREL, PINR, AMGT, TF, TX

SUBJECT: TFFLU01: OFFICIAL TURKMEN REACTION TO INFLUENZA A
(H1/N1) PANDEMIC

11. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

12. (U) Although there have been no reported cases of H1N1 in Turkmenistan or in the Central Asia region, the government has taken certain steps in reaction to the influenza A (H1/N1) scare and has publicized many of these measures in the official press. On WATAN TV news on May 2, Minister of Health, Ata Serdarov, described the steps being taken to raise awareness in the local population on prevention and spread of the A/H1N1 influenza. At the May 1 Cabinet of Ministers session, President Berdimuhamedov had instructed Serdarov to launch a broad information campaign. Serdarov explained the origin of the virus and symptoms of the disease. he explained that thermo-scanners would be set up at Ashgabat international airport and at the airport in Turkmenbashi to scan all incoming passengers. He said medical centers had been set up in hotels to check foreign guests for the disease. Serdarov underscored that there has been no incidence of H1N1 in Turkmenistan or any of the neighboring countries, but travelers who go to the United States, Canada, or European countries should wear face masks and be careful with the personal hygiene.

13. (U) In a May 4 article entitled, "What is A/H1N1 Virus?" in the official Russian-language newspaper, "Neytralniy Turkmenistan," Ministry of Healthcare and Medical Industry Spokesman, Redzhepmurad Geldyev, answered questions about transmission, government-led initiatives against the penetration of the virus in Turkmenistan, preparedness of authorities to deal with the threat, availability of additional information about the virus, safety of pork products, vaccines and medicines, and other preventive measures.

14. (U) Local employees of Post's Travel and Visitors Unit said that doctors from the Ministry of Healthcare and Medical Industry are visiting each room in all hotels around Ashgabat to take the temperature of hotel guests. Embassy travelers noticed brochures containing warnings about H1N1 at passport control windows at Saparmurat Turkmenbashi International Airport in Ashgabat. The brochures include logos of the

Ministry of Healthcare and Medical Industry and World Health Organization, and are printed in both Russian and Turkmen.

¶5. (SBU) COMMENT: While media is tightly controlled and the government is reluctant to allow reporting on public threats, including crime, officials realized it was in their interest to publicize what is being done to prevent H1N1. The vast majority of Turkmen have access to satellite television and Russian news. They know about the virus in other countries. The government no doubt wanted to assure the public that everything is under control. END COMMENT.

MILES